

Arlington and Roslyn Place District

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
May 4, 1981

Commission on Chicago Landmarks
Revised April 1988

ARLINGTON AND ROSLYN PLACE DISTRICT
between Clark Street and Lakeview Avenue

Arlington Place and Roslyn Place, between Clark Street and Lakeview Avenue in Chicago's Lincoln Park community, exemplify the low scale, high density development that occurred in the 1890s and early 1900s along the city's parks and boulevards. Rowhouses predominate, but several freestanding residences, the largest of which is the Theurer/Wrigley House at the corner of Arlington and Lakeview confirm the appeal of this site to developers and successful businessmen who built or bought homes for their families here. Less inbred than the Gold Coast, Arlington and Roslyn offered a convenient, attractive environment in which the homes, although smaller in general than those on Astor Street or State Parkway, were constructed with the best materials and finely wrought details. Along the eastern edge of the district are highrise apartment buildings, facing Lincoln Park and reflecting the second wave of development in the area: the construction of tall apartment buildings along Lakeview and other major thoroughfares in the area beginning in the 1920s as real estate pressures intensified and more people wanted, and could afford, a view of the park. At the other end of the district, wrapping around the block between Arlington and Roslyn, is a three-story apartment building with storefronts on the ground floor of the portion facing Clark Street, a typical form of building found along neighborhood commercial streets. Although this building serves, in part, a commercial function, its size and scale are compatible with the rest of the district, as are the four small apartment buildings on Roslyn Place. The Arlington and Roslyn Place District is a well preserved assemblage of houses, few of which have been altered. Enhanced by an abundance of trees and small front gardens, the two streets are a particularly impressive and interesting part of the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

The Neighborhood

The Town of Lake View was organized in 1854 and annexed to the City of Chicago in 1889. Its boundaries were Fullerton Avenue, the North Branch of the Chicago River, Devon and Western avenues, and Lake Michigan. Settlement of the area had begun in 1837,

and through the 1840s, people of German, Swiss, and Luxembourg origins settled there. Small farms were established west of Halsted Street; the eastern part of the community was divided into small suburban estates. As roads through the town improved, particularly after annexation to Chicago, the agricultural and suburban character gave way to industrial development along the river and the redivision of the eastern side of the area into narrow city lots, usually twenty-five feet in width. The area closer to the lake and to Lincoln Park, for which improvements in the section north of Fullerton Avenue began in 1881, remained a more affluent area than the western part of the former town.

The Arlington and Roslyn Place District

There are forty-seven residential structures in the Arlington and Roslyn Place District, the earliest built in 1894 and the most recent completed in 1925. Although building records for the decade of the 1890s are sparse, six building permits for structures within the district were recorded in 1894 (one was actually recorded on December 29, 1893) and seven more in 1895. Five permits are recorded for the period from 1900 to 1912. All the houses on the streets were designed in architectural styles popular in the years just before and immediately after 1900, so it is likely both streets were built up largely by 1910. There are eight pairs of twin houses and two groups of three built by one owner within the district. None of the apparent builders of these duplicate homes is listed in city directories as living on Arlington or Roslyn, and so speculative development seems to have played a significant role in the creation of what is now the district.

The houses on the two streets show an eclectic use of elements from several historical styles of architecture. Many of them have overtones of the Richardsonian Romanesque, with rusticated stone facades and round arches, combined with a variety of fanciful gables and porches. 425 Arlington is faced with rusticated grey limestone, has arched windows, and a Dutch stepped gable. A popular form of building in Chicago, using grey limestone with a rough or smooth finish, evolved from these Romanesque ideas. Although its ornamentation usually derived from classical architecture, the greystones found on Arlington and Roslyn are imaginatively embellished with details from various sources. They have corner turrets, topped with conical roofs, or bay windows, the latter a typical feature of greystones.

453 and 455 Roslyn are twin greystones, one with a turret and one with a bay, both sharing a common stringcourse. 422 Arlington, designed by H. M. Hansen in 1894 for Alex Chytraus, a judge of the Cook County Superior Court who had immigrated to Chicago from Sweden as a child, is an elaborate greystone with facing of smooth limestone, an Ionic column of granite supporting the entrance porch, and two smaller columns separating windows above the porch. 414 Arlington, an elegant version of the greystone with a turret extending through the roof and a small terrace outside the high first-floor windows, was designed in 1894 by Edmund R. Krause for Arnold Tripp, an attorney. 439 Roslyn is a Gothic greystone with pointed arch windows and Gothic tracery in wood in the front door. City directories of the late 1890s indicate that 439 was occupied by Gustav Hessert,

Sr., a physician, and his sons, a doctor and an engineer. Gustav Hessert, Jr., secretary of the American Brewing Company, lived at 425 Arlington, described above. G. D. Searle, a chemist who found the G. D. Searle Pharmaceutical Company, lived at 425 Roslyn, in one of a pair of elaborately detailed greystones. Of the forty-four buildings in the district, half are faced with grey limestone and show features of the typical Chicago greystone.

Another group of houses in the district are faced with rusticated brown or reddish sandstone. In overall form they are identical to the greystones, and they show the same variety of details. A group of three houses at 426, 428, and 430 Roslyn, built by Benjamin Green in 1895, have red stone facades and bay windows; two of them have flat-sided bays and triangular gables, and the middle one has a round bay and an ogee gable. 418 Arlington is another reddish stone house, but its fraternal twin, 416, is a greystone; their third, or attic, floors share a Gothic Queen Anne design that suits both houses very well.

Fredrick L. Chapman, head of a publishing firm of the same name, lived on Roslyn Place at a now demolished house at the eastern end of the block. He built three houses at the western end of Arlington Place in 1895. The three have the same outline but different facades. The Roman brick facade of 440 Arlington combines Gothic and Elizabethan details in limestone; 436 and 438 are red brick Georgian designs, one with arched windows and terra cotta ornament, the other with rectangular windows and stone trim. Across the street, 439 Arlington, built in 1908, has a symmetrical Georgian front and next to it, on the west, one of the most unusual features of the district: a bird sanctuary owned and maintained by the owner of 439 and protected from development by an easement given to the Chicago Audubon Society.

426 Arlington is the most unusual architectural design in the district and the only known to have been published in an architectural journal. The August 1895 issue of *Inland Architect and News Record* contains a rendering of the house designed for William V. O'Brien, an art dealer, by the firm of Flanders and Zimmerman. John J. Flanders and W. Carby Zimmerman became partners in 1886 and designed many notable residences in Chicago, particularly in Kenwood and Hyde Park. When their partnership ended in 1898, Zimmerman opened an office in Steinway Hall where many of the Prairie school architects worked in the 1890s, and he seems to have shared their interest in the Arts and Crafts movement as it was developing in America and Europe. This interest may account for some aspects of the picturesque design of 426 Arlington and for its medieval details. Roman brick, used on the exterior, was a favorite material of the Prairie school and the band of windows on the second floor is a characteristic arrangement of their work. The major feature of the facade is the two large arched openings, now both windows but originally one was the entrance. The arches rest on carved lintels with sea monsters, foliage, and faces of men with long beards. At either end of the band of second-floor windows are shields with heraldic devices. At some time in the past, possibly in 1921, a new entrance was built at the side of the house, using the original stairs and side rails. The arched entrance was filled in to match the existing window, and both were completed with a new arrangement of small panes of glass. Despite these changes, the house retains much of its original character and feeling.

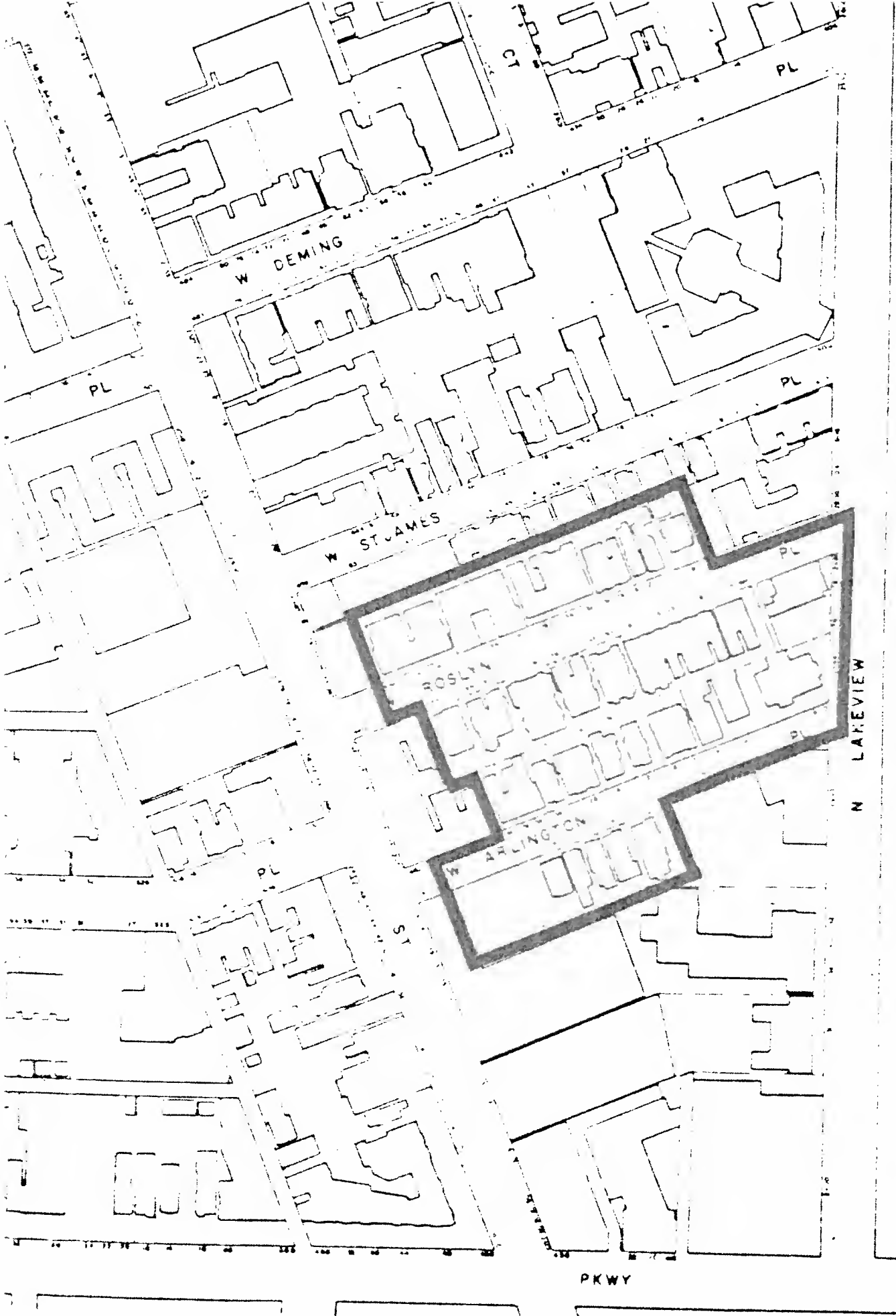
The Theurer/Wrigley House, 2466 Lakeview Avenue, and its large coach house and an early design by Richard E. Schmidt and possibly Hugh M. Garden, two architects who were part of the Prairie school movement but whose first designs were in a more traditional mode. This house, completed in 1896, was built for Joseph Theurer, a wealthy brewer who was president of the Schoenhofen Brewing Company. The house is a combination of Italian Renaissance and Baroque elements, elaborately modeled in terra cotta and stone. The house was purchased by William Wrigley, Jr. in 1911, and his name is commonly associated with it. The Theurer/Wrigley House was designated a Chicago Landmark in 1979.

Of the five small apartment buildings within the district, three are variations on the typical Chicago three-flat. 432-436 Roslyn was built in 1909 as a twelve-flat. A yellow brick structure, 432-436 has an interesting cornice and two arched entrances under characteristic sun porches on the second and third floors. 452-458 Roslyn was built as a twelve-flat in two stages, the first half in 1910 and the second half in 1911, with an open porch for each apartment. In 1912, 441-445 Roslyn, a brown brick six-flat with enclosed porches, was built on the south side of the street. The long three-story apartment building with storefronts that runs between Arlington and Roslyn, extending down both streets, was built in 1922. Known as the Midtown Block, this yellow brick structure has a flat facade along Clark Street, but the Arlington and Roslyn sides are divided by recesses into three-flat-like sections which emphasize the residential, rather than the commercial, nature of the structure.

The special character of the Arlington and Roslyn Place District derives from its uniformity and its diversity. The buildings follow a uniform setback, and all the houses have a flight of stairs leading to the sidewalk. Building heights and floor levels are consistent, and most structures have the same narrow width, particularly on Roslyn Place. Almost every house has a similar form: a bay window, a turret, a gable, and dormer windows. Within the common framework, each house or pair of houses is treated differently. The same materials may be used but in a variety of ways, in combination with ornament of all kinds. The rhythm of the streetscape pleases the eye; the color and detail of each house attracts individual attention. The apartment buildings within the district are not so large or obtrusive as to detract from the cohesiveness of the two streets. Together, all these buildings create a district of lively diversity and unique character.



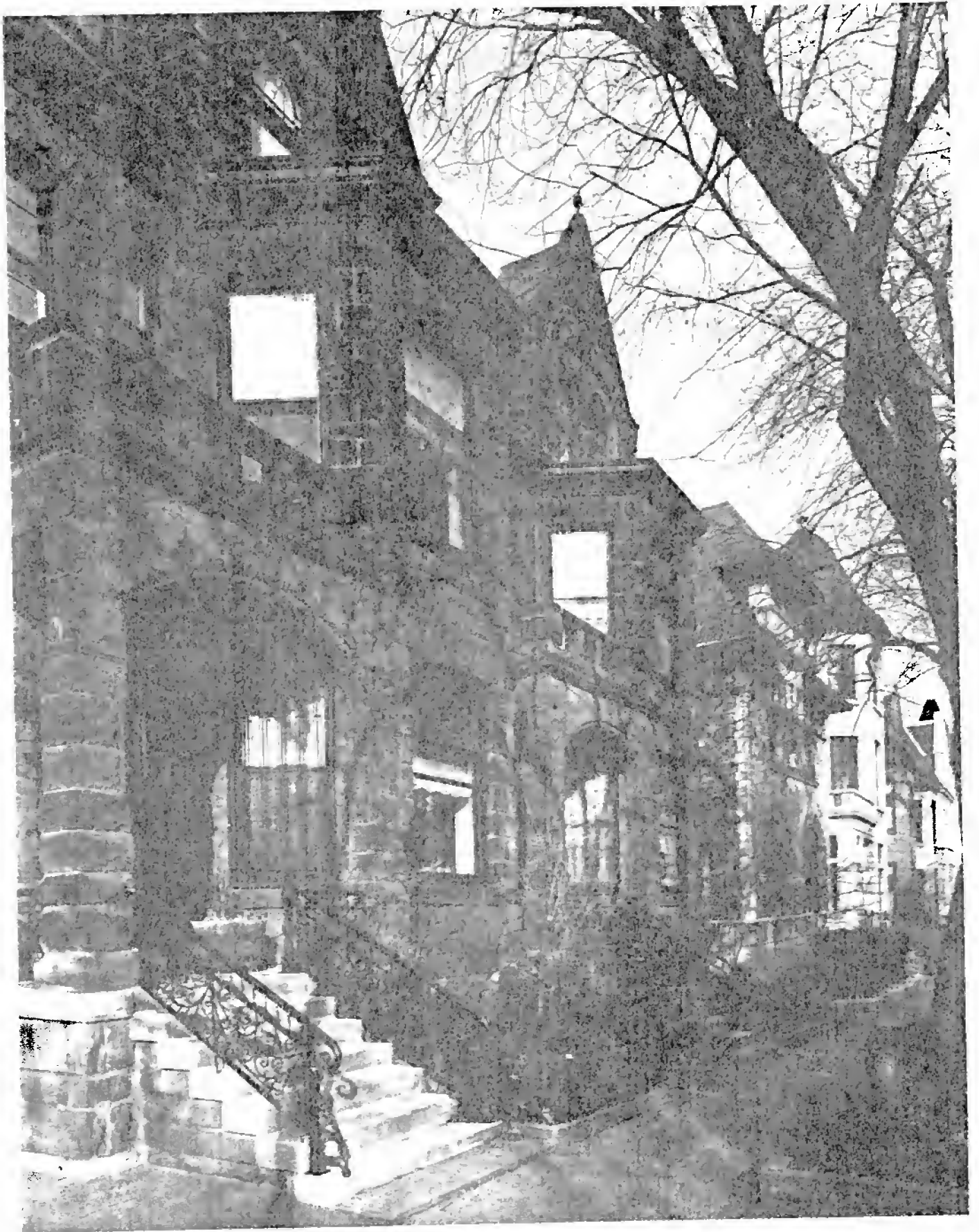
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OPPOSITE:

A uniform setback characterizes the district, as seen along the north side of Arlington Place. The pair of rusticated stone houses in the foreground was built in 1894.

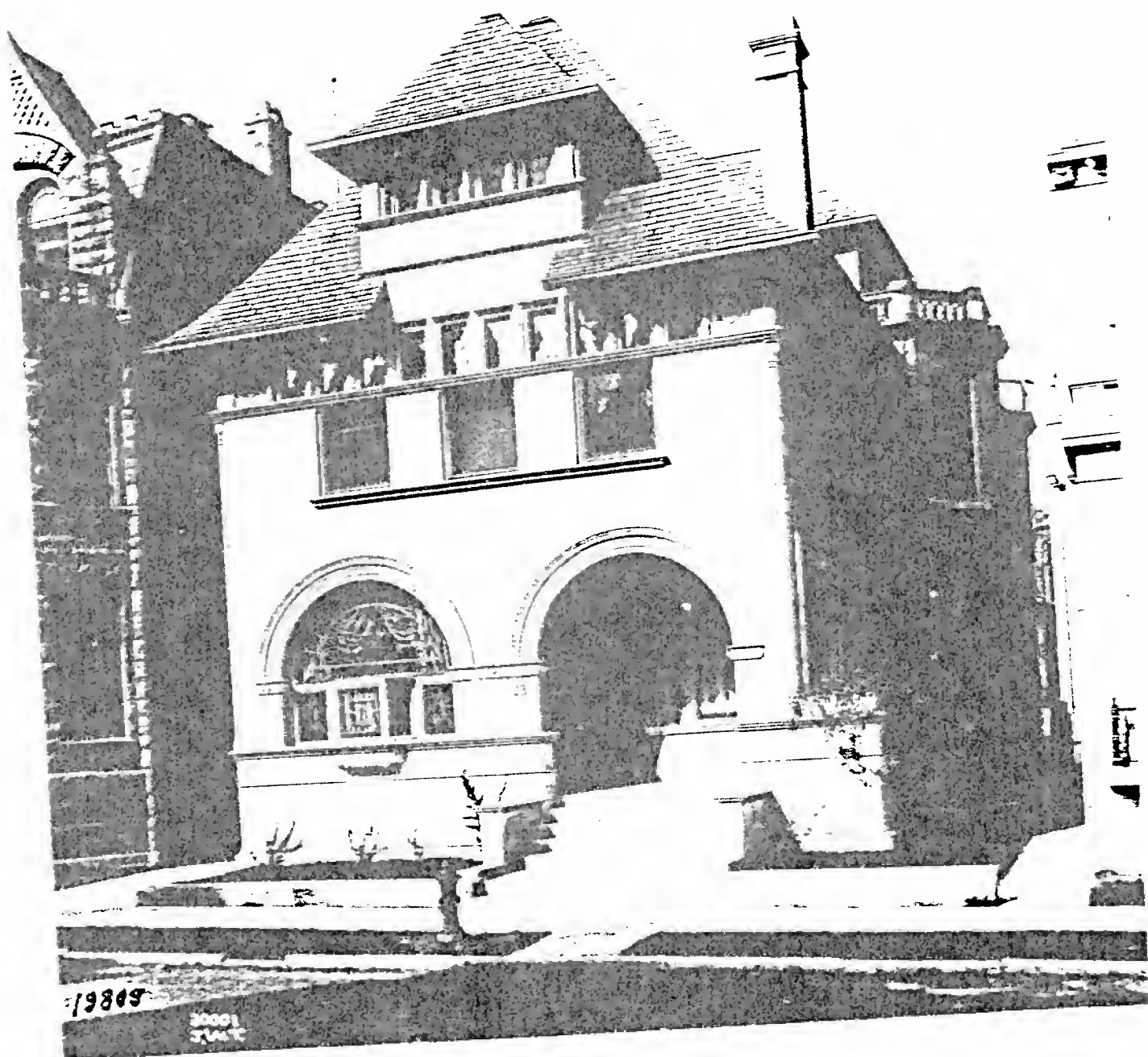
(Bob Thall, photographer)



OPPOSITE:

Flanders and Zimmerman designed the house at 426 Arlington Place, built in 1894. This photograph shows the house as it appeared shortly after completion.

(Photograph courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago)



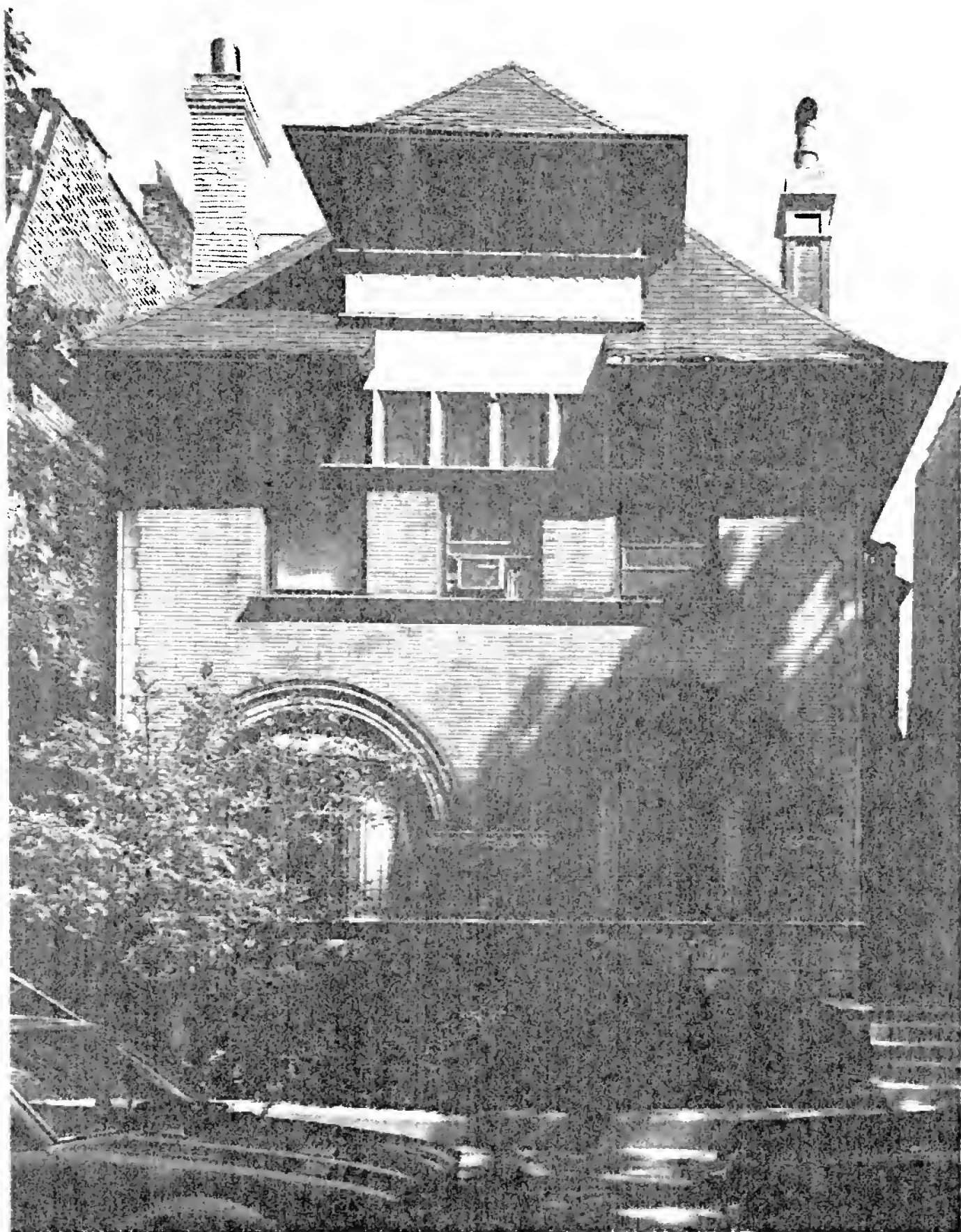
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OPPOSITE:

In 1921, the house at 426 Arlington Place was remodelled. A new entrance was created at the east side of the house, and the former entrance was converted into a window. The existing front window was altered to match the new window.

(Bob Thall, photographer)



OPPOSITE:

Variations on the typical Chicago greystone are found on both streets of the district. These two houses are at 437 and 439 Roslyn Place.

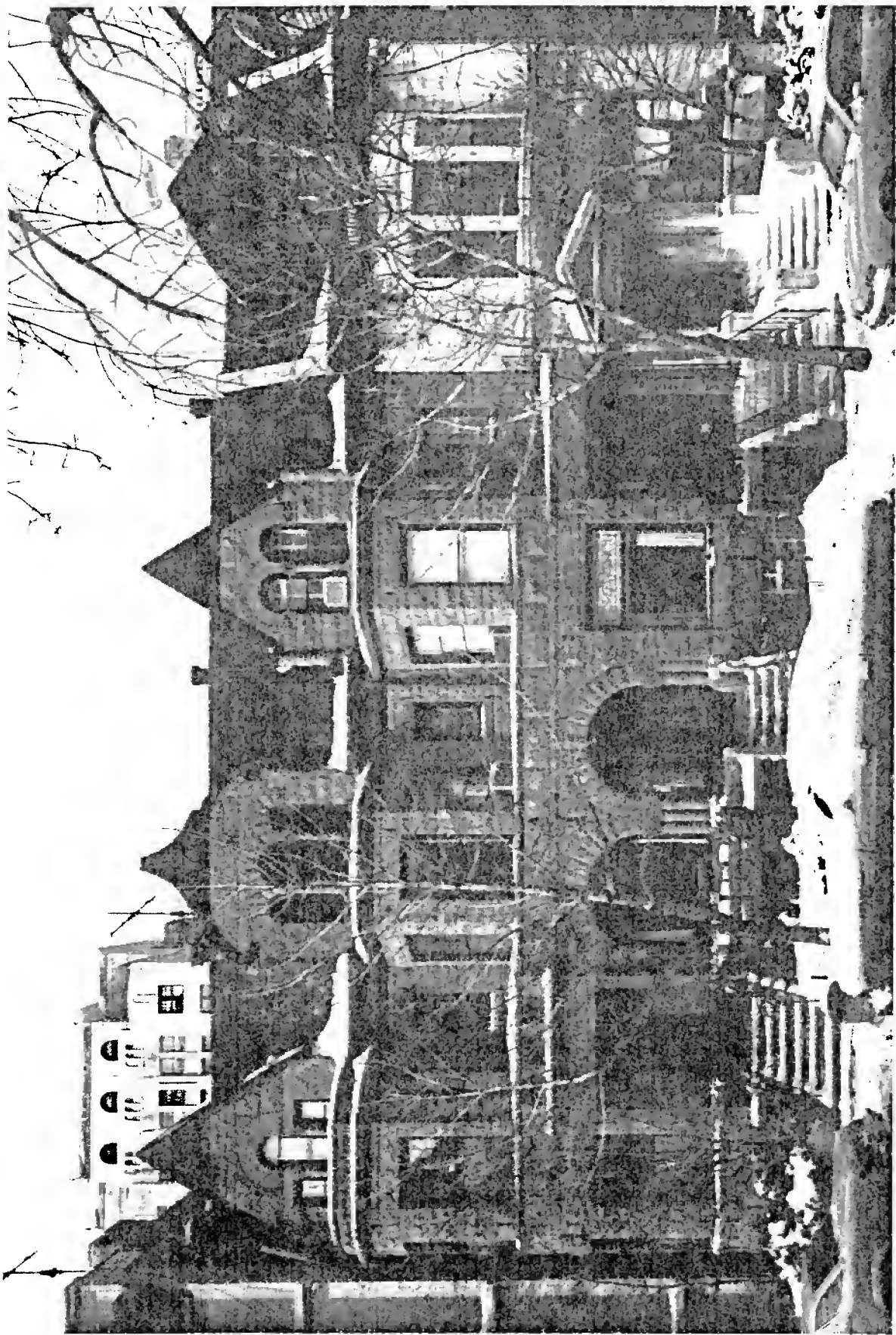
(Bob Thall, photographer)



OPPOSITE:

The three houses at 426, 428, and 430 Roslyn Place were designed by A. F. Hussander for Benjamin Green and constructed in 1895. 424 Roslyn Place, at the right of the photograph, is another greystone variation.

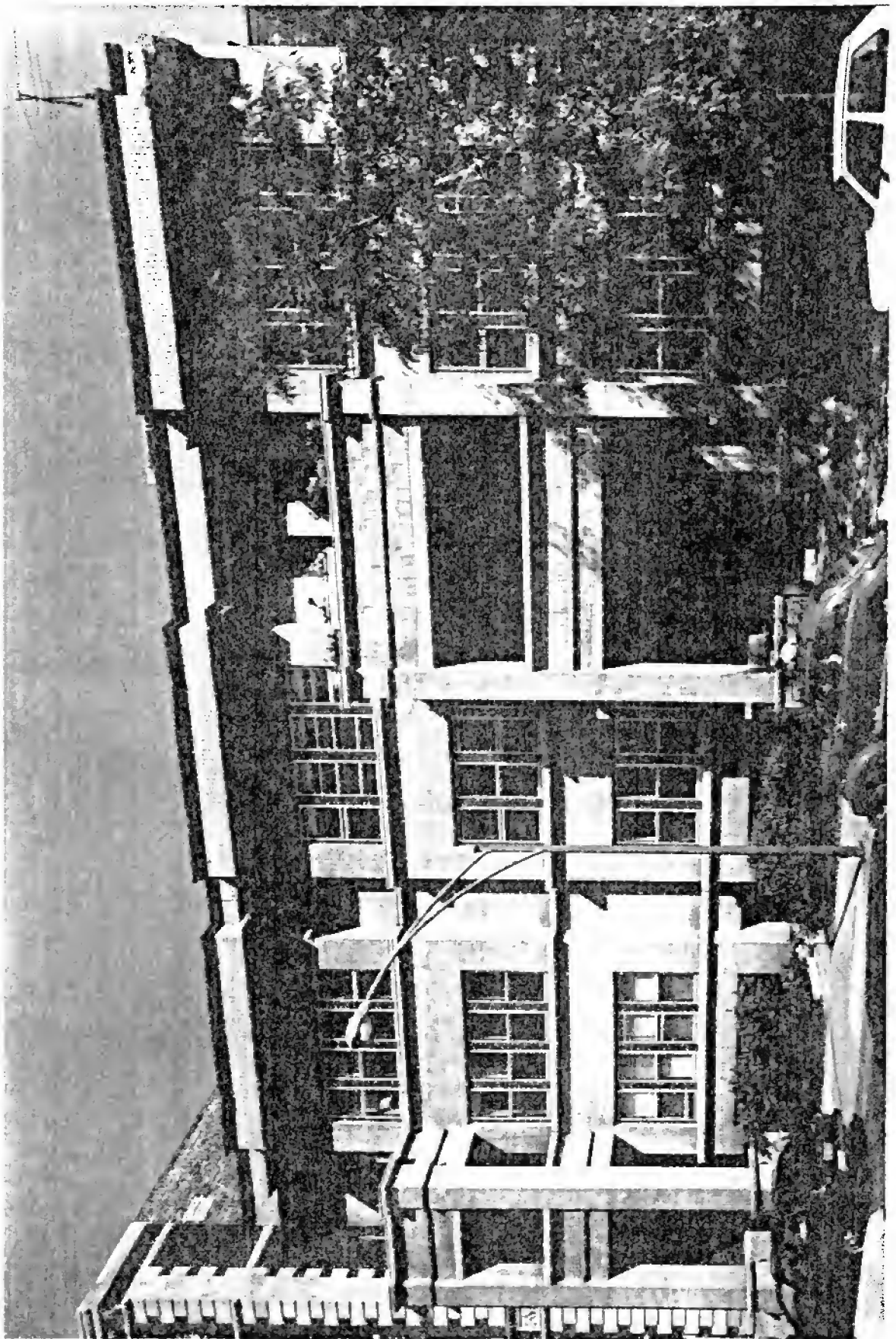
(Bob Thall, photographer)



OPPOSITE:

Architect Andrew Sandegren was co-owner of the property at 432-36 Roslyn Place for which he designed an apartment building, constructed in 1909.

(Bob Thall, photographer)



The Commission on Chicago Landmarks was established in 1968 by city ordinance, and was given the responsibility of recommending to the City Council that specific landmarks be preserved and protected by law. The ordinance states that the Commission, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, can recommend any area, building, structure, work of art, or other object that has sufficient historical, community, or aesthetic value. Once the City Council acts on the Commission's recommendation and designates a Chicago Landmark, the ordinance provides for the preservation, protection, enhancement, rehabilitation, and perpetuation of that landmark. The Commission assists by carefully reviewing all applications for building permits pertaining to the designated Chicago Landmarks. This insures that any proposed alteration does not detract from the qualities that caused the landmark to be designated.

The Commission makes its recommendations to the City Council only after extensive study. This preliminary summary of information has been prepared by the Commission staff and was submitted to the Commission when it initiated consideration of the historical and architectural qualities of this potential landmark.



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